Dedication Address
The Harvey Cushing
General Hospital
JOHN F. FULTON



# THE HARVEY CUSHING GENERAL HOSPITAL



JOHN F. FULTON

FRAMINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS
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#### A PRINTER'S INTRODUCTION



While present at the ceremony dedicating the Harvey Cushing General Hospital at North Framingham, Mass., I was impressed by the splendid Dedication Address delivered by Dr. John F. Fulton.

This eulogy was so expressive and sincere that every listener in the large audience became mindful of the fact that Dr. Fulton not only admired Dr. Cushing as a famous surgeon, but also as a highly cultivated and scientific humanitarian.

I therefore felt that this Address deserved a permanent record, and after obtaining Dr. Fulton's reluctant consent, I am delighted to put in print this inspiring discourse.

A. COLISH

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Mrs. Cushing, Governor Saltonstall, Gentlemen of the Armed Services and Guests:

ome years ago, Dr. Cushing, for whom this institution is named, gave an address entitled *The Personality of a Hospital*. The occasion was the centennial of a sister institution of this state, the Massachusetts General Hospital—the"m.g.h."—but the remarks made then apply quite as well now. "Many of us," he said, "have known hospitals under perishable and tattered canvas which possessed an individuality, character and spirit often found lacking in others encased in a more enduring shell of brick and mortar . . . So it is not the externals nor the inherited wealth, social position or occupation of an institution, any more than of an individual, which give it renown—it is the character of the service it performs."

The reference to perishable and tattered canvas stems from a wide knowledge of military hospitals and surgery, for Dr. Cushing had come from a long line of physicians, many of whom at one time or another had served in the armed forces. Matthew Cushing, his ancestor, had come to this country from England in 1638. Matthew begat John, from John came Matthew the 2nd; then Josiah who was followed by the two Davids, and Dr. David

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Cushing, Harvey. The Personality of a Hospital. Ether Day Address—Massachusetts General Hospital. October 18, 1921. Boston Med. Surg. J., Nov. 3, 1921, 185:529-536. (Reprinted in book form, Boston, 1930, 40 pp.)

Cushing, Jr., physician of Rehoboth, Massachusetts, and father of Erastus, saw apprentice service during the American Revolution. Erastus, aged 10 during the War of 1812, found himself in Cleveland in 1835 as physician and head of a flourishing family. Henry Kirke, his eldest son, the father of Harvey, acted as chief surgeon to the 7th Regiment of Ohio Militia and was on active duty with the Northern Armies for four years; he cared for the wounded in many major battles including Gettysburg.

With this vigorous American background it was little wonder that Harvey, the 10th and youngest child of Henry Kirke Cushing by his wife, Betsey Williams, should have plunged into war activity once opportunity presented itself. Although much disappointed in 1899 because Simon Flexner had not taken him to the Philippines, early in 1915, as you are aware from the moving tributes of General Miles and General Rankin, Cushing organized a Harvard Unit and promptly took it abroad to serve with the American Hospital in Paris. In May 1917, after the United States had come into the war, he was appointed Director of Army Base Hospital No. 5, which served in France for nearly two years.

Dr. Cushing proved a dynamic force wherever he moved. His temperament, at times stormy, was also capable of infinite patience, but when he wished something done he was a man of persistence and unyielding determination. As a soldier from civil life he retained a quaint disregard for authority and he never quite accustomed himself to the use of military "channels," but despite this he managed to emerge without being court-

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martialed, nor yet was he made Surgeon-General; both contingencies, however, were at one time within the

realm of possibility.

I cannot describe Dr. Cushing's many contributions to medicine and surgery. He did much to extend our understanding of wartime injuries of the head-cranial wound ballistics, as we now describe it. He also proved that if a man has energy, curiosity and a driving desire to help the wounded, it is possible, even when under fire, to make scientific contributions of the first water. As with Vesalius, Ambroise Paré and Weir Mitchell, war became a stimulus rather than a deterrent to positive achievement. One has only to enumerate his introduction of the use of suction in neurosurgical procedures, his employment of the magnet for withdrawing deeply embedded shell fragments, the silver clip for hemostasis, not to mention a host of other less dramatic procedures which together served to convert wartime surgery of the head from a horror into one of the most fruitful and gratifying of all branches of traumatic surgery.

Constantly striving for improved methods of hemostasis, he was led, some years after the last war, to introduce electrosurgical methods for ablation of vascular tumors; and today the coagulating- and cutting-current units are standard equipment in every large civilian and military American operating room. How fascinated and gratified Dr. Cushing would have been could he have known that his pupils in this war, following in his tradition, have similarly been inspired to positive achievement. Eagerly would he have read Hugh

Cairns and Howard Florey's epic report<sup>2</sup> on the use of penicillin in the campaign in Sicily, particularly as it was applied in dealing with head injuries; and, more recently, he would have heartily welcomed the discovery of Franc Ingraham and Orville Bailey<sup>3</sup> that fibrin foam, a byproduct of Edwin Cohn's masterly separation of the various blood proteins for purposes of transfusion, can be used with dramatic effectiveness as a hemostatic agent both in neurological and general surgery, and also in dental surgery. A war that brings such things to the fore cannot have been fought in vain.

The personnel of our armed services has gone forward in this spirit, and the subtle influence which Harvey Cushing exerted upon the whole medical profession finds expression today in the atmosphere and personality which you, Sir [turning to Colonel Noyes], have already made so evident in this hospital. Completed nine months after it was first started, the Harvey Cushing General Hospital has already taken upon itself qualities distinctly human, not only in matters of time sequence, but in the spirit and achievements of its staff. The turbulent prenatal period of the Institution was presided over by men who had a burning pride in their work. Indeed it would

<sup>3</sup> Ingraham, Franc, and Bailey, Orville T. The use of products prepared from human fibrinogen and human thrombin in neurosurgery. Fibrin foams as hemostatic agents: fibrin films in repair of dural defects and in prevention of meningocerebral adhesions. J. Neurosurg., 1944, 1: (in press).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Florey, H. W., and Cairns, Hugh (Brigadier, R.A.M.C.). Investigation of war wounds. Penicillin. A preliminary report to the War Office and the Medical Research Council on investigations concerning the use of penicillin in war wounds. [London] War Office (A.M.D. 7). October, 1943. 114 pp. [Not yet available for general distribution.]

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seem that Colonel Gillette and his colleagues of the Turner Construction Company wished to outdo Mother Nature and to have their brain-child precipitated, as it were, into Colonel Noyes' lap before he or his staff were ready for the delivery. The engineers and contractors who have performed this remarkable feat have shown the world that we in medicine are perhaps too conventional in our thinking—too hemmed in by our own biological concepts. From them we gain a new and vigorous point of view, which has characterized this and much else they have achieved in this war.

It is perhaps not known to many of you that Harvey Cushing, the surgeon, had once considered becoming an architect. From early childhood he had shown remarkable talents as a draughtsman, and during his years at Yale College, his closest friend was Grosvenor Atterbury, the well-known architect who, exactly fifty years later, built at Yale the handsome Medical Library which now houses Dr. Cushing's great collections. Few therefore could have appreciated more than Cushing the miracle that has been wrought in erecting buildings of this size and quality in the brief interval necessitated by an urgent military time-table; and in the light of Dr. Cushing's own wartime experience as a surgeon—for he knew well hospitals of "perishable and tattered canvas," as well as those having a "more enduring shell of brick and mortar"-he would have appreciated particularly the dignified spirit of co-operation and service which Colonel Noyes has instilled into his entire staff, the hall-mark that gives to a hospital its individuality.

In coming here today, I have wished to set down something characteristic of Dr. Cushing himself. What would he have said or done in dedicating a hospital named for one of his former teachers? He would have inspected the operating rooms and the wards; he would have scrutinized the case histories, and no doubt would have made some lively comment on the record formshis chief bête noire in the last war. Having explored these things, he would perhaps then have looked about for a library, for men cannot do effective work in any profession without access to books. Since Cushing himself was a voluminous writer, and since this hospital is to bear his name, I am authorized to carry the greetings of Yale University, Dr. Cushing's alma mater, and also to present to your Hospital as a gift from the University through its Medical Library, a collection of Dr. Cushing's published writings, including reprints of his papers, the originals of his many surgical monographs, and his literary essays. An attempt has been made to assemble as complete a collection as possible, and it is hoped that these may form the nucleus of an active Hospital Library.

In closing, I can only congratulate the Surgeons General of the Army, James Magee and his successor, Norman Kirk, and the distinguished men of their command, on thus adding to an already most illustrious record of achievement in this war—adding to it the Harvey Cushing General Hospital of Framingham. I would also congratulate Colonels Gillette and Noyes upon the conspicuous parts which they have played in

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creating this hospital. In the name of the American medical profession, and particularly of those who were fortunate enough to have been Harvey Cushing's pupils, I wish Colonel Noyes and his staff health and Godspeed in the days that lie ahead.





